Brattleboro June 25th

Dear Wentworth.

In your letter you have spoken of letters of sympathy received. You ought perhaps ere this to have received one from me. You have not done so, chiefly because Louise's presence with you was in itself an assurance of our interest, if any was needed. It is true, when we sent her off, we did not think of aiding & abetting in any treason against the Government. But we readily consented to her remaining in the house of a suspected rebel, & thereby gave her countenance, if not aid. And of this she is not regretful, nor we repentant.

I have wished however for my own sake

to say a few words on the proceedings of Friday the first. As the Spiritual preliminary of those of Friday the second, those proceedings cannot be regretted now. But it was not for such an end that they were designed, nor for the chance alone of producing this, could they be justified. For who could have imagined beforehand that the Mayor of Boston could be so ignorant of his duty under the precise words of the law, that two Magistrates should be present with the military & command them, as to delegate his authority for the control of public order to a military officer responsible, as such, neither to him nor any one else.

If an attempt at rescue in such case is made, the force engaged should be such as to put failure out of the question. From your sermon I infer that you think &

probably your sole hope is to make it understood that a slave cannot be taken in Massachusetts. And beyond this no one can possibly go. The law will not be repealed nor essentially modified. Not the North nor even New England will demand this, so as to convince the South she is in earnest. The North is not ready for revolution & disunion. Nothing short of this being seriously threatened will check the South. And she feels that her only safety lies in steady aggression. The moment she hesitates she is in danger. Daring is prudence to her, & she knows it. The North does not feel so. Many of her best people think, oh, slavery must succeed! liberty, like truth, is mighty & will prevail. They forget another saying as true, that a lie will travel round the world while

truth is putting on her boots, which is equally to be predicated of slavery & freedom.

Your sermon is read & despatched. W H C who read it Saturday night after he went up Stairs to bed, & he had ridden that day from N Bedford, liked it much. I & he is hopeful & in my talk with him & the signs of the times I could not but agree with him that the South betrays much consciousness of weakness, in spite of her successes. He wants much to see you. He goes to Boston to day, into the country tomorrow to Fisher's wedding, the to town again for a day or two, — he says, until Monday undoubtedly, at W H C's Mt Vernon Street.

Do not plead guilty. You are yet liable to arrest under the Fugitive

Slave Law. And those near Antioch would rejoice at imprisoning you. If you can get off by defect of proof, your case will show the safety of attempts at rescue & this is desirable.

My only wish is that the attempts at recapture of fugitives were more frequent. As it is the lesson taught by one of them & the feeling awakened is lost before the next. And all state it would hunt slaves next Spring if a good Tariff & rise in factor stock were to be secured thereby.

We are all well. Mother went yesterday to Deerfield. Mrs Mary is to improve with Lucy & Ann. Give her my love, & the same to Anna.

By the way, do you believe in the proposed union of Whigs & Free Soilers in the North, on anti-Nebraska ground alone? A Mass. convention is called in this State for July 4th.

I have sent an article to the Commonwealth about it, signed Wild Oats. They may not choose to print it, but it should appear tomorrow. After all perhaps the country may as well go to the devil its own way, without our bothering ourselves. Every dog will have its day at last.

Good bye dear boy

Yours truly

Francis J. Higginson

MS. B. 1.22 (61)